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Concluding report on the project

Technological survey of net and rope materials

Summary of project.

In September 1983 a grant of D.kr. 100,000,- was given by the Technology Council to find new methods for producing and treating nets and ropes. The patent literature was identified as the information source material to be investigated.

The project was to be carried out by the Service Branch of the Patent Directorate and the Danish Institute of Fisheries Technology with assistance from Dr. tech. E. Kaiser from the Invention Office.

In addition to representatives from the above mentioned institutions, the steering committee of the project had representatives

Information Services

from the following concerns in the net and rope industry:

N.P. Utzon A/S, Fredericia

Randers Rebslaaeri A/S, Randers

Esbjerg Tovvaerksfabrik A/S, Esbjerg

Gram Fletteri A/S, Gram

Roblon A/S, Frederikshavn

The project steering committee held their first working meeting on December 9, 1983 in Hirtshals.

The following decisions were made at the meeting:

1. The Patent Directorate Service Branch was to carry out a search in the INPADOC microfiche catalogue for patents taken out by the following companies chosen by the industry representatives: Anza, Bridport Gundry, Kristiansand Fiskegarn (Fish Net), Cotesi, Van Behlem, Cosahl, Nordanett and Bihr Freres.
2. The Patent Directorate Service Branch was to carry out a manual search in their own collection for patents regarding fishing gear.

The results of the searches by the Patent Directorate were to be sent to the Danish Institute of Fisheries Technology, who, in cooperation with the Patent Directorate, was to carry out the final selection. p. 2

3. E. Kaiser was to carry out a further study of the rope product Danline, a Norwegian product produced under Japanese license.

On June 25, 1984 these studies were completed and at a meeting on August 28, 1984 at N.P. Utzon in Fredericia the results were discussed.

As a result of the two searches by the Patent Directorate, a total of 81 patent documents were collected (Appendix 1 and 2)

(not attached, Transl. note). Of these, a total of 26 were selected which, divided into 6 topics, were sent to the members of the steering committee (Appendix 3) (not attached, Transl. note). In addition, a list of the patents not selected was prepared and sent (Appendix 4) (not attached, Transl. note). Of the 26 patents only one was considered to be relevant by the industry representatives. However, the patent in question was already known.

E. Kaiser's investigation of the rope product Danline was received with great interest, and Japanese samples of the material were distributed to the steering committee members.

On the basis of the study of the patents presented at the meeting on August 28, 1984, some general guidelines for establishing search profiles for further searches were drawn up. For example, searches should be carried out on the subjects of synthetic fibres with high strength, including carbon fibre, treatment of these fibres to increase their breaking strength and their ability to stay smooth.

It was decided that the further search should be carried out on data bases containing patent literature, so that the Patent Directorate Service Branch search for patents published after January 1, 1981 on the patent data base world patent Index, and Danish Institute of Fisheries Technology search the data bases Claims (U.S. patents), World Textiles, Rapra, Abstracts and DKI (German Plastics Institute) (Deutsches Kunststoff Institut).

The material that resulted from the on-line searches

was sent to the members of the steering committee in January 1985.

The on-line searches carried out by the Danish Institute of Fisheries Technology resulted in 770 references from which 87 patents of presumed relevance were selected. From these documents the Patent Directorate selected 32 as more or less relevant (Appendix 5) (not attached, Transl. note). p. 3

The search by the Patent Directorate Service Branch in the World Patent Index resulted in 900 patent documents from which 200 references were selected and judged to be relevant or possibly relevant. (Appendix 6) (not attached, Transl. note).

This material was evaluated at a meeting on March 14, 1983 at Randers Rebslaaeri.

The industry members of the steering committee found that the material contained patent documents of interest for them and that the relevancy of these patents now had to be examined more closely. One had reached such a level of concreteness that the individual companies could not tell which patent documents they found relevant. A closer scrutiny of the 32 patent documents and 200 abstracts was considered to be a considerable job and it was expressed that some form or another of a summary would be desirable. It was also conceded at the same time that such a summary would require an expertise which would probably not be available outside the industry group. On the whole the industry members were satisfied with the material presented and it was also found that it would be of interest to net makers.

Concluding Evaluation

The result of the introductory manual searches on the subject of fishing gear was, with the exception of only one patent document, judged to be without interest. However, there were some interesting patents in the material that resulted from the broader based on-line searches. The industry members did not want to specify which patents they found interesting. This reticence was also noticable in the discussion on establishing a search profile for the on-line searches. It was therefore only possible to establish a broadly based profile.

As a result of the reticence of the industry members p. 4
to indicate concrete interests in connection with utilization of new technology in their business, it was not possible to determine special areas of interest as a continuation of the results of the on-line searches. It was therefore not possible to continue the project with the purpose of seeking further information on a narrower area within the net- and cordage industry technology as specified in the application to the Technology Council. The individual companies would consider if they singly could undertake a deeper information search on specific topics.

A more precise search profile could probably have made the on-line searches more effective, but it is admitted that the industry members, when all together, could not contribute to such precision.

The industry representatives indicated that the project had shown them that questions to be used in an on-line search

should by precisely formulated. But it is also admitted that in connection with establishing search profiles for the on-line searches, in addition to the above mentioned problems, it was difficult to arrive at precise formulations since it was not known within which area there would be interesting ideas. This stage was only reached at the conclusion of the on-line searches. It was indicated that at this point a catalogue of ideas appeared which made it possible to express problem areas more precisely, and these could only be expressed individually.

E. Kaiser from the Inventors Office did a good job on one product that all the industry representatives were interested in getting more information on. The results could be made available since E. Kaiser, as a representative for a research institute, could contact the foreign concerns.

In conclusion the following can be emphasized regarding the patent search:

1. On-line searches must be considered as an essential, if not necessary, supplement to manual searches.
2. Broadly based on-line searches will often necessitate considerable manual sorting.
3. Precisely formulated problems/search profiles cannot always be expected to be formulated for a group of competing concerns. p. 5
4. Broadly based searches in the patent literature can point out patent documents that contain product development ideas of interest.